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This Guide

Working abroad sounds to many people like an adventure. However, without thorough preparation, starting with a successful application it is bound to fail. Therefore, Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) has prepared a set of country guides describing the main routes to employment in over 40 countries. Are you interested in working in Australia, Italy or Japan? Has your partner accepted a job in Hungary, the United States of America, or the United Arab Emirates? Are you looking for an internship possibility in Spain, Singapore or Switzerland? The Looking for work in... guides from ELM will help you with accurate information and practical tips on working cultures and differences in job hunting in over 40 countries.

As an extra addition to the series - following many requests - ELM introduced a new guide: Looking for work in International Organisations which explains how to successfully look for work in for instance the institutes of the European Commission, UN institutions and NGOs. This guide contains information on Poland. It tells you how to apply for a job in Poland and the cultural differences that you will come across when looking for a job in Poland. Do not underestimate those national differences. What is common in one country might be very unusual in another country. Despite globalisation, to find a job abroad you need to be aware that national differences manifest themselves not only in different languages, but also in different recruitment practices.

Thus, looking for work in another country involves more than writing your CV/resume in another language.

No matter the country in which you are looking for work, the key focus of your CV should be to persuade the employer to invite you for a job interview. Accordingly, your CV should be regarded as a marketing tool, adapted to the market in which you intend to use it. The information in this guide, together with the sample CV, will help you to adapt your application for the Polish job market. However, make sure your application remains a reflection of your personality. Working abroad is one thing, but having a job that does not suit you will definitely cause homesickness!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nannette Ripmeester', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Nannette Ripmeester, M.A.
Managing Director
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Country Profile

Country

The Republic of Poland is situated in Central Europe and has a surface of 312,685 square kilometres (194,293.5 square mi). Its neighbouring countries are Russia (Kaliningrad), Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in the East, Germany in the West and the Czech and Slovak Republics in the South. In the North, Poland borders on the Baltic Sea.

Its landscape is diversified: forests, hills and mountains, some large rivers and many lakes are characteristic for this country. The main rivers are the Vistula and the Oder. Poland's forests include one of Europe's oldest forests, Białowieża Forest, which is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The capital of Poland is Warsaw (1.711 million inhabitants, est. 2009). Other main cities are Lodz (744,541 inhabitants, est. 2009), Krakow (754,854 inhabitants, est. 2009), Wroclaw (632,240 inhabitants, est. 2009), Poznań (556,022 inhabitants,

est. 2009), Gdansk (455,830 inhabitants, est. 2009) and Katowice (311,179 inhabitants, est. 2009). Furthermore, the country is divided in 16 provinces (województwo or voivodships) which function as administrative regions. These are then again subdivided in 379 districts which are subdivided in local administrations (gmina).

Climate

Poland has a moderate climate that is influenced by Atlantic atmosphere that collides with the temperatures of the Euro-Asian continent. This collusion is the base for the unpredictable weather. Six seasons can be indentified: autumn, early winter, winter, early spring, spring and summer. The summer is characterised by warm temperatures and a vast amount of rain. The pre-winter period suggests the arrival of winter, typically involving fog and humidity. Polish winters are known to be moderately severe and wet. In the North-East, in the Sudeten and in the Carpathian mountains (particularly in the Tatra part) winters are generally harsher and longer than in other districts.

The coldest month is generally January and the warmest is generally July. The average annual temperature lies between 6°C (42.8°F) and 8°C (46°F).

Cities	Winter			Spring		
	jan	feb	mar	april	may	june
Warsaw	-3/27	-2/28	2/35	8/47	14/57	17/64
Poznan	-1/30	-0.5/31	4/40	10/50	15/59	18/65
Krakow	-2/28	-2/29	4/40	9/49	14/57	18/64
Gdansk	-1/30	-0.5/31	3/38	8/47	13/55	15/60
	Summer			Autumn		
	juli	aug	sep	okt	nov	dec
Warsaw	19/67	18/65	14/57	8/47	3/37	-0.5/31
Poznan	19/67	19/67	15/60	10/50	4/40	0/32
Krakow	19/67	19/67	14/57	9/49	3/37	0/32
Gdansk	17/63	16/62	14/75	9/49	4/40	1/34

Table 1. Daily average temperatures (C°/F°)

Population

Poland has approximately 38.14 million inhabitants (2009).

In recent years the number of residents is decreasing due to aging and migration. According to the latest census of 2002, the majority of the population (96.7%) has the Polish ethnicity. What nowadays is a highly homogenous state, was once a multinational and multi-religious country. In fact, before the Second World War, one third of the population did not have the Polish nationality. However, after the Holocaust the number of Jews and Roma living in Poland greatly diminished. In addition, the communist regime worked very hard to anchor the Polish nationality by depriving minorities of their civic rights. Next to this, many Polish and non-Polish migrated in order to escape from the communist regime. Today, minorities count for around 3% of the total population. According to the census of 2002, the main minorities on the Polish territory are German (0.4%), Silesian (0.4%), Byelorussian (0.1%) and Ukrainian (0.08%). Furthermore, small numbers of Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Roma and Jews can still be found. The minorities tend to live along the Polish borders, particularly along those borders of nations they share language and culture with. Small Jewish communities can be found in some Polish cities while the Roma do not concentrate on a particular part of the territory. However, it must be said that the numbers the 2002 census quotes are subject to ongoing debate in Polish society. Representatives of respective minorities claim to represent much larger group than the census indicates.

History

Poland in the early years

The territory nowadays known as Poland has been inhabited since the prehistoric era. The name Poland derives from pole, which means plane, describing the rather flat territory between the two rivers Oder and Vistula where Slavic tribes had settled. From approximately the 6th century onwards, these tribes started to form groups, which could be seen as miniature states.

In 966, Mieszko, one of the first Polish rulers, baptized himself and his entire country to Christianity. At the time, Poland was confronted by the Czech state, and the fast expanding German empire on both sides. For Mieszko to secure his rule he needed the support of the Czech empire and the new group of Christian European Commonwealth states could provide security under the rule of Pope. By marrying the Czech princess Dubravka, he further ensured the independence of his country. 966 is seen as the founding year of Poland. Even though the names of the earlier rulers are known, Mieszko is seen as the founder of modern day Poland. Mieszko's first son, Boleslaw I, was crowned to be king by the Polish bishops in 1025, starting the Piast dynasty. The name was derived from Piast Kołodziej, a legendary figure in early Polish history. The crown stayed in the family throughout the next three centuries.